HealthWatch: Hygiene Is Key to Healthy Teeth and Gums

Dental health is much more than having white, cavity-free teeth. It means good dental hygiene with regular brushing, flossing and dental checkups.

Use a soft-bristled brush and clean all accessible surfaces of the teeth. Gently brush along the gum line as well, since this is a common buildup point for bacteria.

Follow brushing by cleaning between teeth using a cleaner, like floss. Flossing helps remove plaque from between teeth ñ a place toothbrushes often canít reach.

After flossing, rinse your mouth with water to wash away loose food particles and bacteria.

Another essential component to good dental health is seeing your dentist twice a year for a checkup. These exams allow your dentist to thoroughly clean your teeth and check for tooth decay. More importantly, they can also look for the onset of serious dental problems like gum disease and oral cancer.

Should you notice signs of more serious problems, be sure to schedule a visit to your dental provider to get them checked out.

Developing gum disease has been linked by research to more serious health conditions. When you have gum disease, bacteria in your teeth and gums can be pumped into the bloodstream every time you chew. For some people, this leads to increased risk for other diseases affecting the body, such as heart disease and stroke.

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